Lililicious~may its fragrance encompass you
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ピエタ

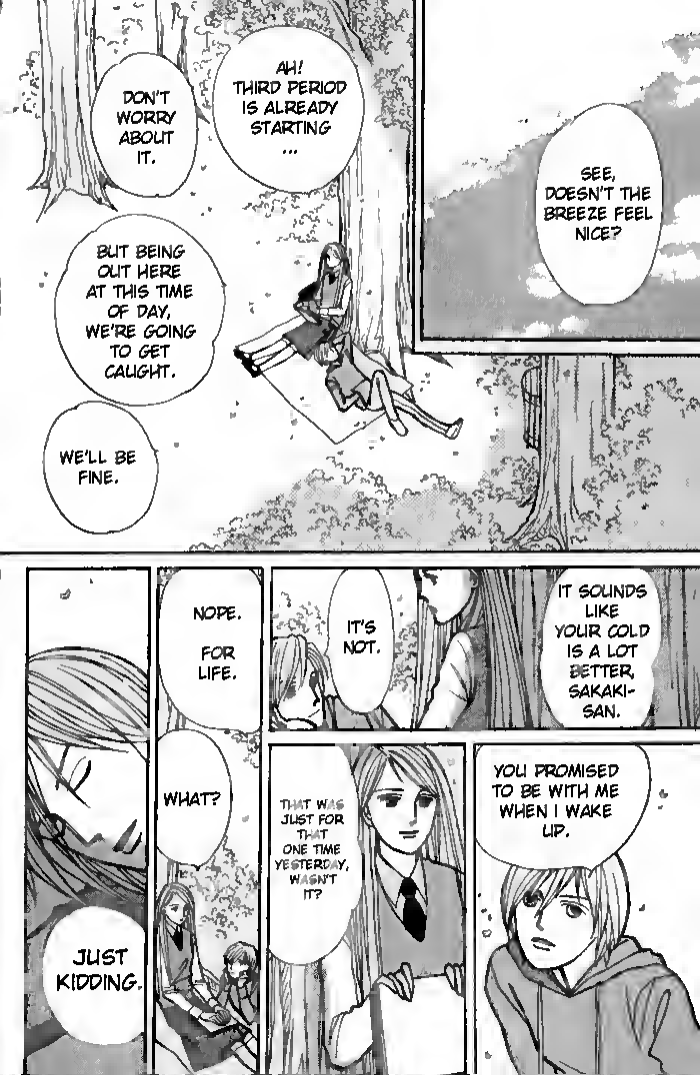
—pietà

Pieta

by Haruno Nanane

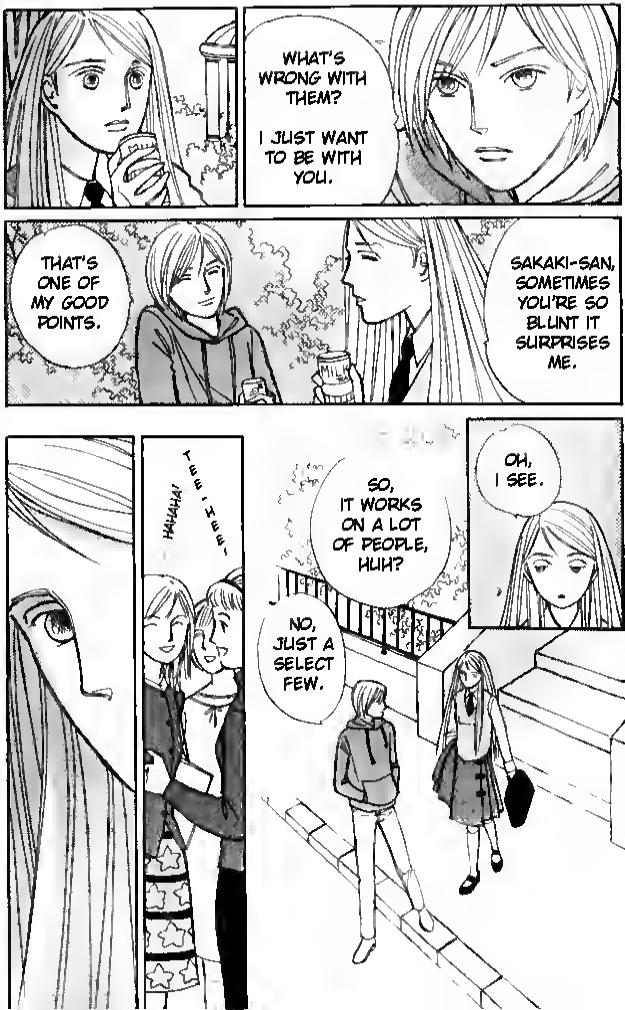
榛野なな恵

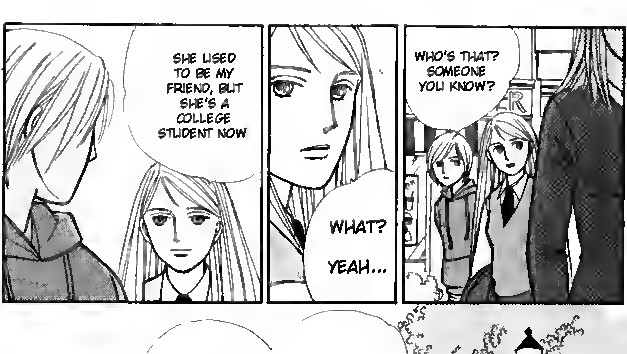
HIGA-SAN!
HERE!
NOMIYA-SAN!
HIGA-SAN? IS SHE OUT TODAY?
"WHISPER-WHISPER"
SAKAKI-SAN AND HIGA-SAN ARE ABSENT TODAY.
NO WAY.
I'M ALREADY LATE AS IT IS.
YOU SHOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT STUFF LIKE THAT.
NO!
LET'S GO FOR A WALK.
IT'S PRETTY NICE OUT.
OKAY, BUT IN THAT CASE YOU SHOULD GO HOME AND GET SOME SLEEP.
WHY --
THANKS AGAIN FOR YESTERDAY
I STILL HAVE A BIT OF A FEVER, WILL YOU TAKE CARE OF ME?


AH! THIRD PERIOD IS ALREADY STARTING ...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
SEE, DOESN'T THE BREEZE FEEL NICE?
BUT BEING OUT HERE AT THIS TIME OF DAY, WE'RE GOING TO GET CAUGHT.
WE'LL BE FINE.
IT SOUNDS LIKE YOUR COLD IS A LOT BETTER, SAKAKI-SAN.
IT'S NOT.
YOU PROMISED TO BE WITH ME WHEN I WAKE UP.
THAT WAS JUST FOR THAT ONE TIME YESTERDAY, WASN'T IT?
NOPE. FOR LIFE.
WHAT?
JUST KIDDING.

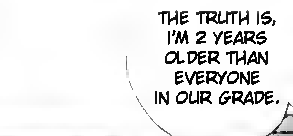
I JUST THOUGHT I'D GO GET SOMETHING TO DRINK.
LET GO SAKAKI-SAN! AH, YOU STARTLED ME!
WHAT A PAIN.
?!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
ROUGH
DO YOU WANT SOMETHING TOO? WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE SAKAKI-SAN?
COFFEE
OKAY.
I'M JUST GOING TO THAT VENDING MACHINE OVER THERE.
YOU'RE GOING TO COME BACK?

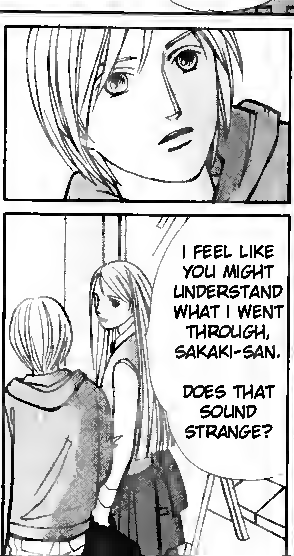
IT WILL BE ALRIGHT.
SHE SAID SHE'D COME RIGHT BACK.
SLOW.
SLOW.
HERE.
CARROT JUICE?
IT WAS ALL OUT OF COFFEE.
CAROTENE IS BETTER THAN CAFFEINE! IF YOU DON'T GET ENOUGH VITAMINS, YOU'LL GET SICK MORE EASILY
WELL, IF I DRINK THIS, WILL YOU SPEND THE REST OF THE DAY WITH ME?
THOSE TERMS SOUND SORT OF SELFISH.


WHAT'S WRONG WITH THEM?
I JUST WANT TO BE WITH YOU.
THAT'S ONE OF MY GOOD POINTS.
SAKAKI-SAN, SOMETIMES YOU'RE SO BLUNT IT SURPRISES ME.
OH, I SEE.
SO, IT WORKS ON A LOT OF PEOPLE, HUH?
NO, JUST A SELECT FEW.
HAHAHA!
HEH HEH~

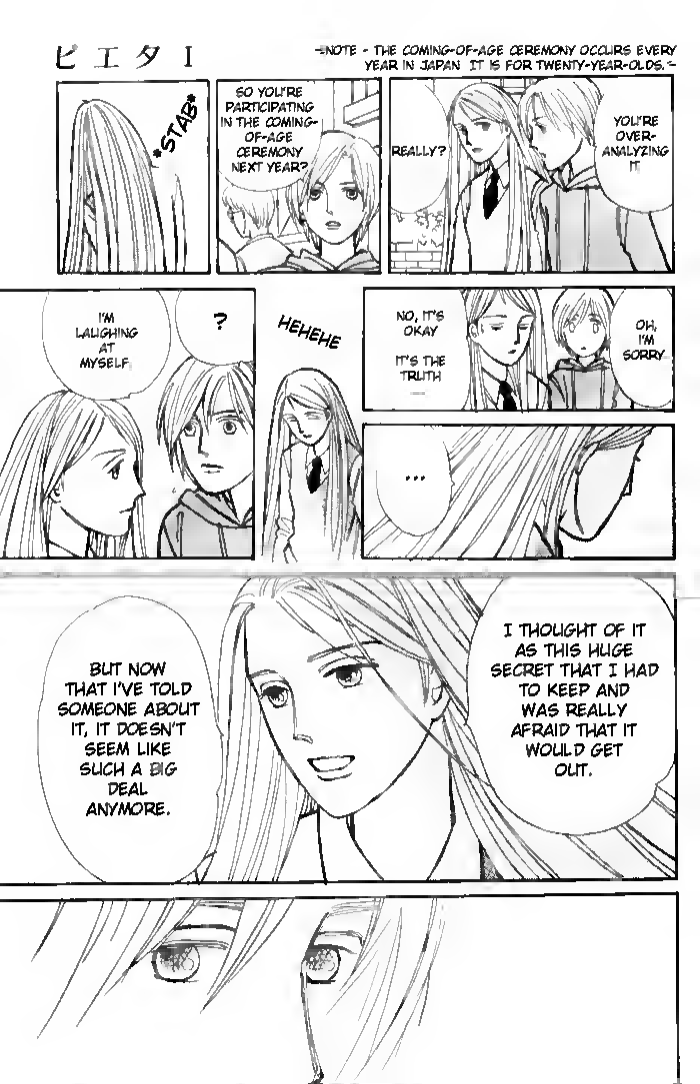

SHE USED TO BE MY FRIEND, BUT SHE'S A COLLEGE STUDENT NOW
WHAT?
YEAH...
WHO'S THAT? SOMEONE YOU KNOW?

I'M BEHIND IN SCHOOL.
THE TRUTH IS, I'M 2 YEARS OLDER THAN EVERYONE IN OUR GRADE.



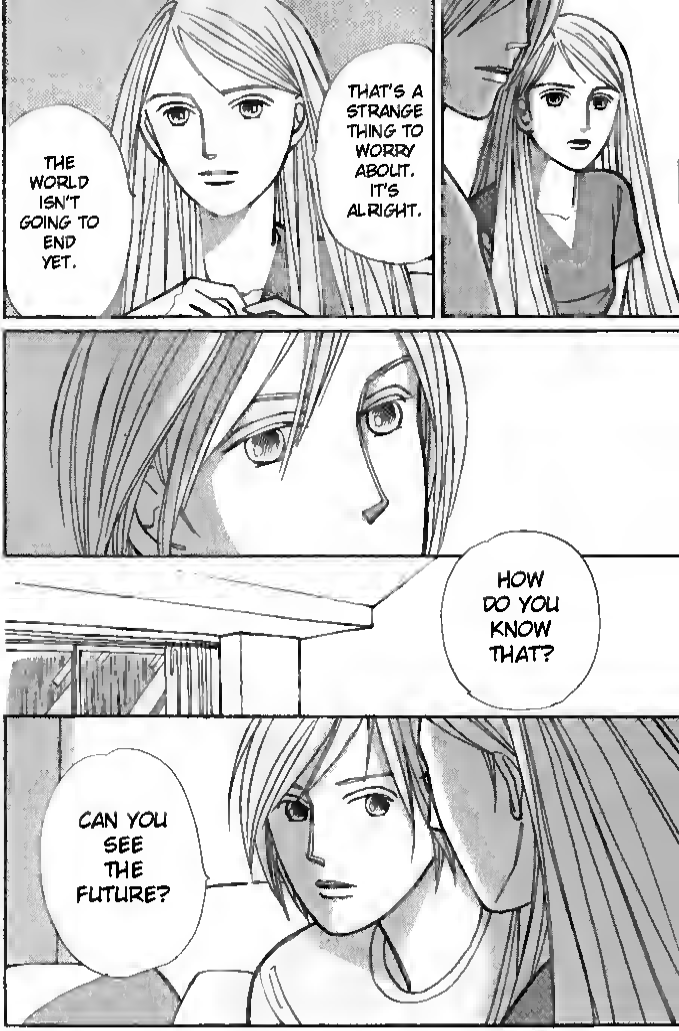

I FEEL LIKE YOU MIGHT UNDERSTAND WHAT I WENT THROUGH, SAKAKI-SAN.
DOES THAT SOUND STRANGE?

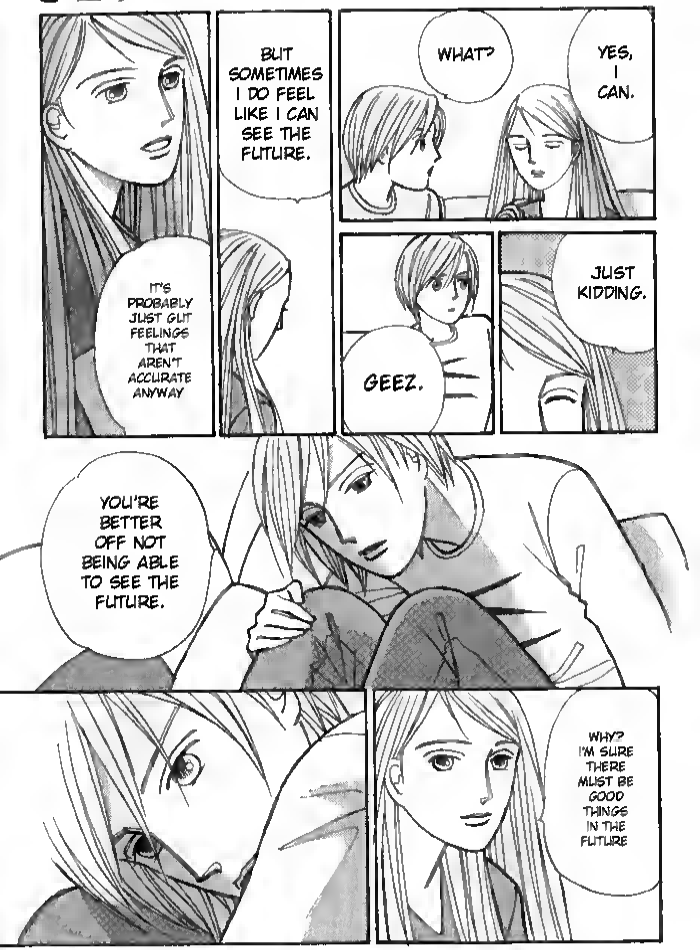
WHEN I WAS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL, I HAD SOME MENTAL PROBLEMS THAT KEPT ME FROM LEAVING THE HOUSE FOR A WHILE.
I WENT TO A LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL AT FIRST, BUT THERE WERE A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO KNEW ABOUT ME AND I FELT INFERIOR TO THEM SO IT DIDN'T REALLY GO WELL.
BECAUSE OF THAT I APPLIED TO THE SCHOOL HERE

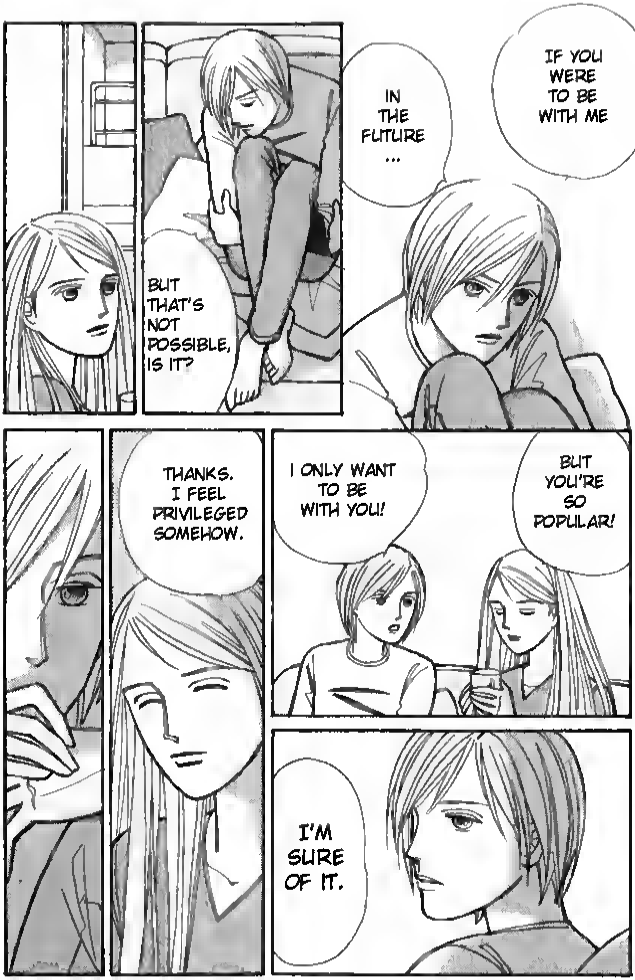

~NOTE - THE COMING-OF-AGE CEREMONY OCCURS EVERY YEAR IN JAPAN. IT IS FOR TWENTY-YEAR-OLDS.~
STAB
SO YOU'RE PARTICIPATING IN THE COMING-OF-AGE CEREMONY NEXT YEAR?
REALLY?
YOU'RE OVER-ANALYZING IT.
I'M LAUGHING AT MYSELF.
?
HEHEHE
NO, IT'S OKAY
IT'S THE TRUTH
OH, I'M SORRY.
...
I THOUGHT OF IT AS THIS HUGE SECRET THAT I HAD TO KEEP AND WAS REALLY AFRAID THAT IT WOULD GET OUT.
BUT NOW THAT I'VE TOLD SOMEONE ABOUT IT, IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE SUCH A BIG DEAL ANYMORE.

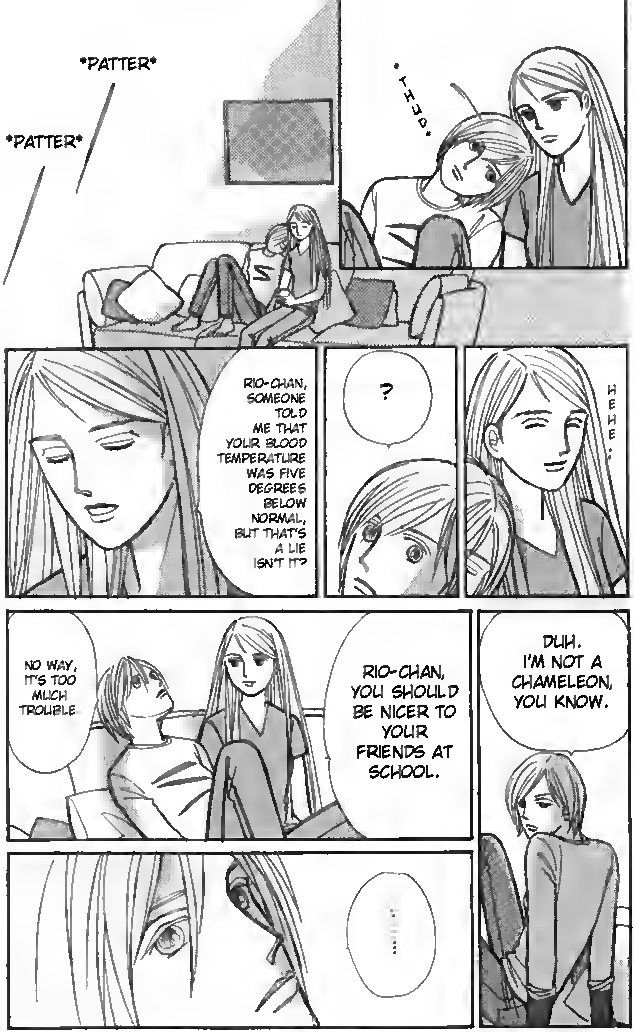
BUT... THOSE TWO THINGS AREN'T REALLY CONNECTED AT ALL.
THAT'S RIGHT. SO IT SHOULDN'T MATTER IF YOU JUST SKIP CLASSES TODAY.
BUT I DRANK THE CARROT JUICE LIKE YOU ASKED!
IF I DRINK CARROT JUICE EVERY DAY, YOU'LL HAVE TO SPEND EVERY DAY WITH ME.
I WON'T.
OKAY, I GET IT SO YOU CAN LET GO OF MY HAND
LATELY, THERE HAVE BEEN STORM WARNINGS THROUGHOUT THIS PREFECTURE. IN KAWAZOE IN PARTICULAR, PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TOLD TO EXERCISE CAUTION.

HEREAFTER, A LARGE AMOUNT OF PRECIPITATION IS EXPECTED IN ALL AREAS, ON THE ORDER OF 10 TO THE 3RD POWER.
I HATE RAIN. AND THE SOUND OF RAIN.
I DON'T HAVE ANY HAPPY MEMORIES OF RAINY DAYS.
I BET IT WILL BE RAINING THE DAY THE WORLD ENDS.

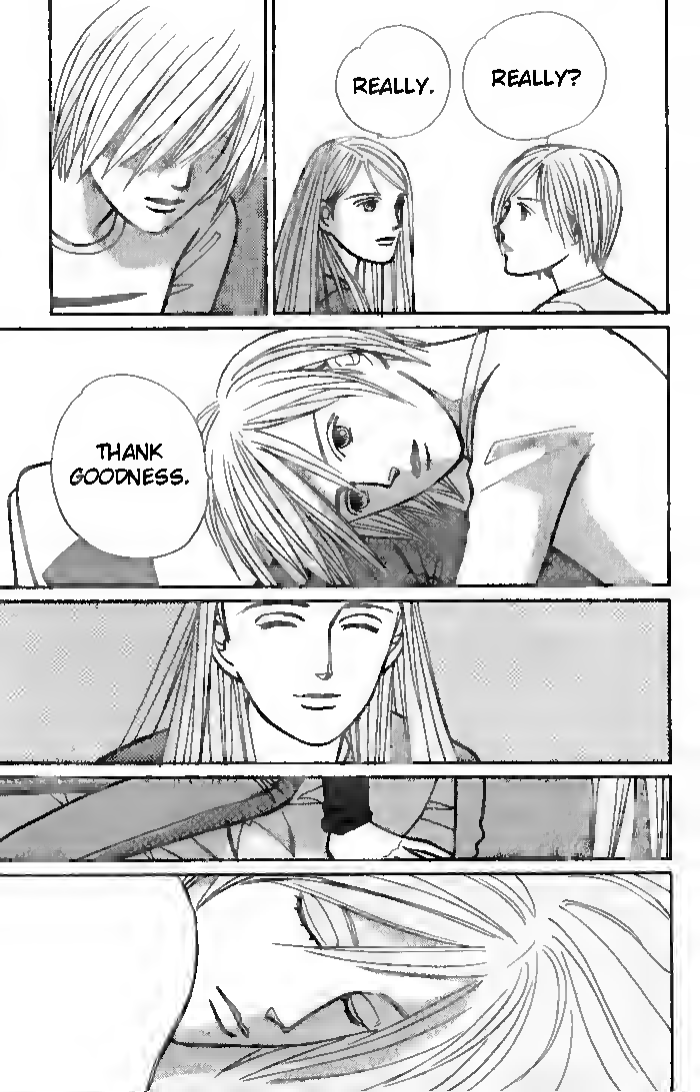

THE WORLD ISN'T GOING TO END YET.
THAT'S A STRANGE THING TO WORRY ABOUT. IT'S ALRIGHT.
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?
CAN YOU SEE THE FUTURE?

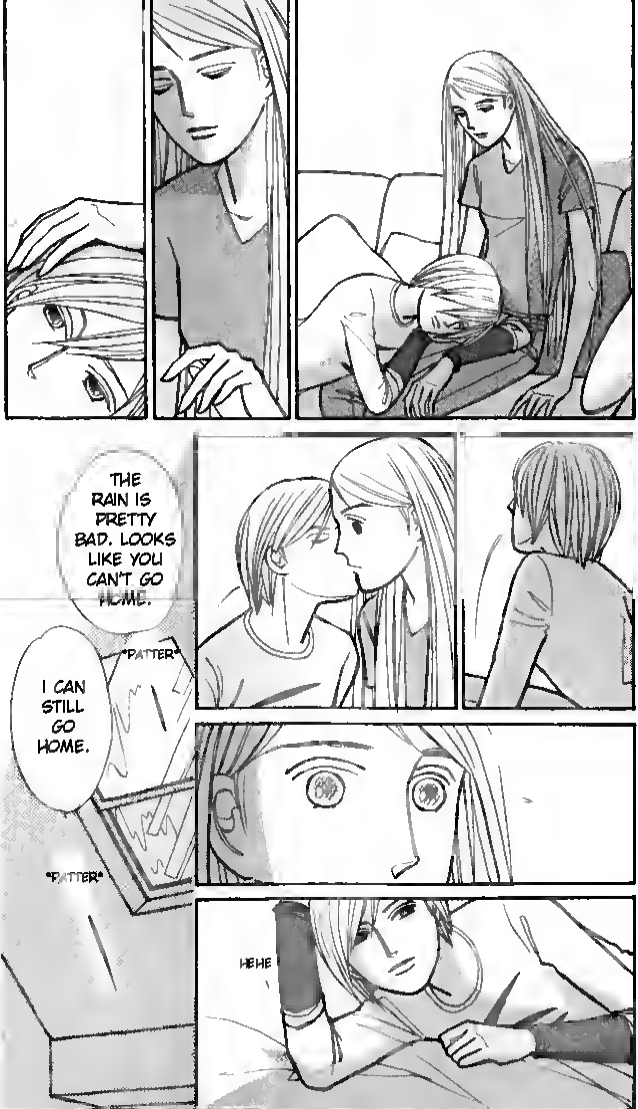

BUT SOMETIMES I DO FEEL LIKE I CAN SEE THE FUTURE.
IT'S PROBABLY JUST GUT FEELINGS THAT AREN'T ACCURATE ANYWAY
WHAT?
YES, I CAN.
GEEZ.
JUST KIDDING.
YOU'RE BETTER OFF NOT BEING ABLE TO SEE THE FUTURE.
WHY? I'M SURE THERE MUST BE GOOD THINGS IN THE FUTURE

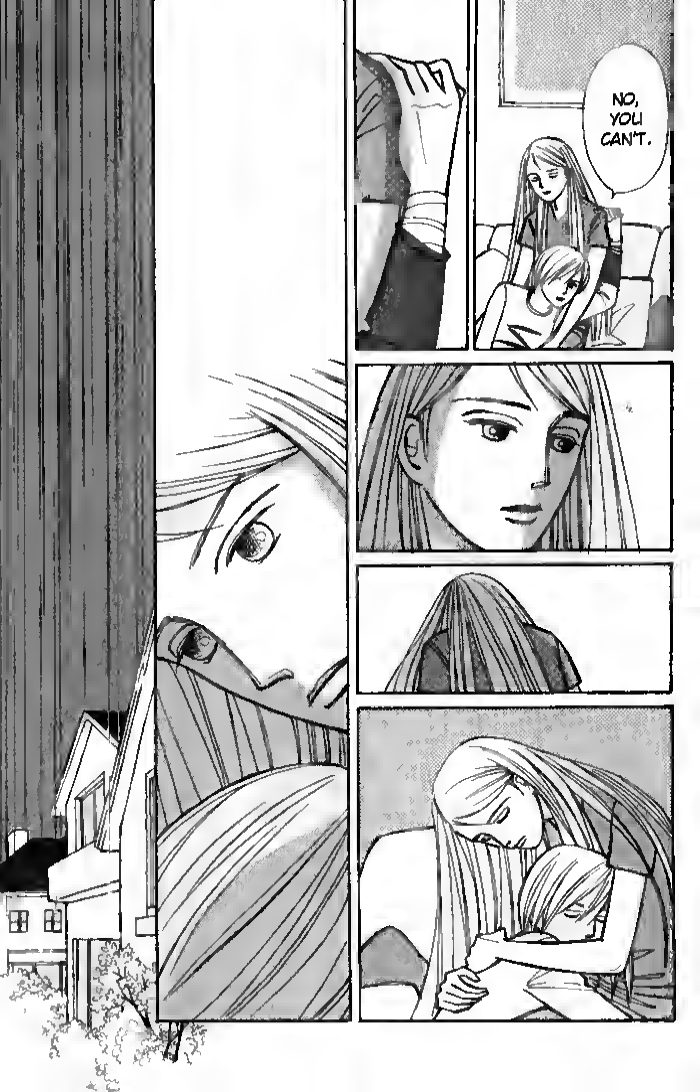

IF YOU WERE TO BE WITH ME
IN THE FUTURE ...
BUT THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE, IS IT?
BUT YOU'RE SO POPULAR!
I ONLY WANT TO BE WITH YOU!
THANKS. I FEEL PRIVILEGED SOMEHOW.
I'M SURE OF IT.


PATTER
PATTER
PEEL
RIO-CHAN, SOMEONE TOLD ME THAT YOUR BLOOD TEMPERATURE WAS FIVE DEGREES BELOW NORMAL, BUT THAT'S A LIE ISN'T IT?
?
HEHE.
NO WAY, IT'S TOO MUCH TROUBLE.
RIO-CHAN, YOU SHOULD BE NICER TO YOUR FRIENDS AT SCHOOL.
DUH. I'M NOT A CHAMELEON, YOU KNOW.
.....

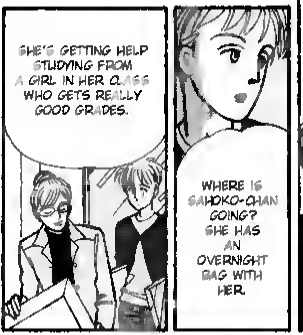
DO YOU LIKE NICE PEOPLE?
YEAH.
THEN I'LL DO IT.
SO LIKE ME A LOT MORE, OKAY?
OKAY.

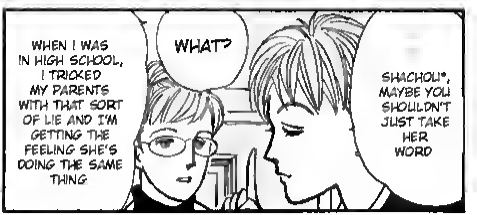

REALLY.
REALLY?
THANK GOODNESS.


THE RAIN IS PRETTY BAD. LOOKS LIKE YOU CAN'T GO HOME.
I CAN STILL GO HOME.
PATTER
PATTER
HEHE

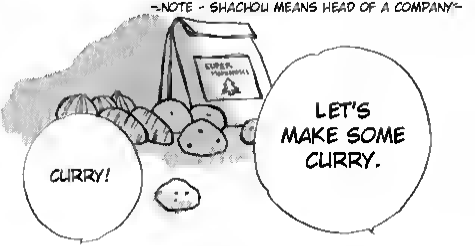

NO, YOU CAN'T.

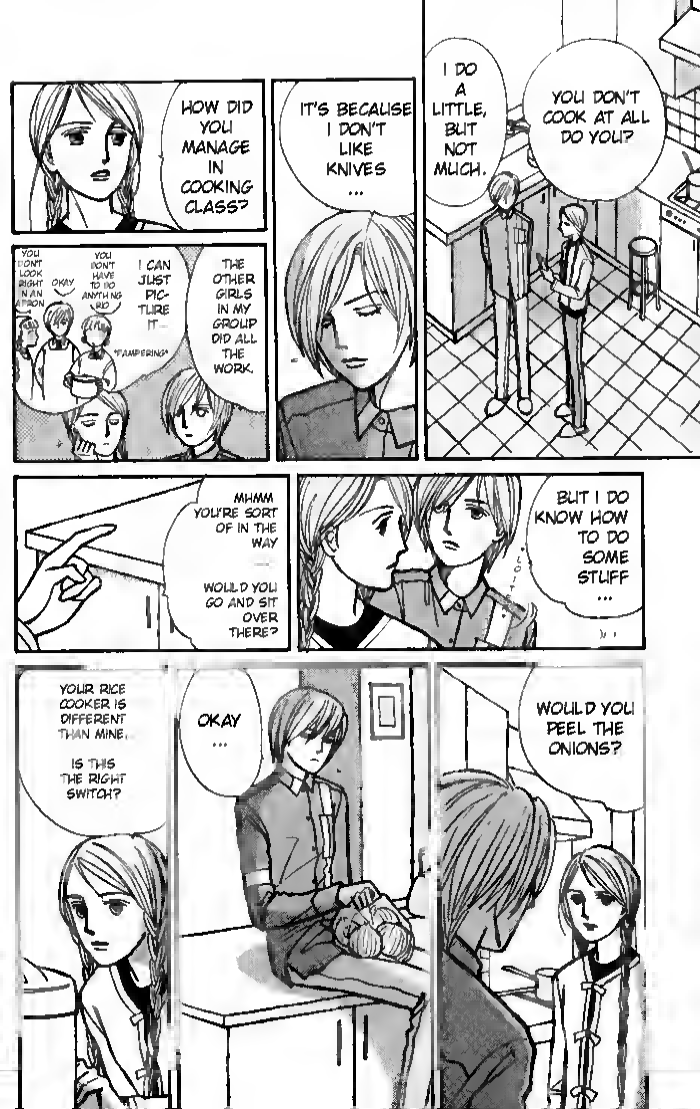
OH, MRS. SAKAKI.
GOOD AFTERNOON.
GOOD AFTERNOON.
REALLY? THAT'S INCREDIBLE!
BUT DOESN'T IT TAKE A LOT OF TIME?
YOU EVEN MAKE ALL YOUR SNACKS BY HAND DON'T YOU, SAKAKI -SAN?
THERE WAS A TIME I WAS CRAZY ABOUT THOSE AS WELL, BUT IT DIDN'T LAST LONG
YES. I'VE COMPARED THEM TO SOME OTHER KINDS, AND THESE ARE THE ONES I TRUST THE MOST
ARE THOSE THE ORGANIC VEGETABLES THAT YOU MAIL-ORDERED?
IT'S BECAUSE OF THAT THAT I FEEL I HAVE TO DO WHATEVER I CAN FOR MY CHILD
THAT'S ABOUT THE ONLY THING THAT YOU CAN DO TO INSURE YOUR CHILD'S FUTURE, ISN'T IT?
WELL, THAT CAN'T REALLY BE HELPED. IT'S A PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY, YOU KNOW. DOESN'T IT MAKE YOU UNEASY TO GIVE A CHILD FOOD IF YOU DON'T KNOW HOW OR WHERE IT WAS MADE? IT CERTAINLY DOES FOR ME
YOU'RE SUCH A GOOD MOTHER.
WHAT A GREAT PERSON YOU ARE
I COULD NEVER BE LIKE THAT.
WELL, HAVING CHILDREN IS MY DREAM.


I'M OFF, SEE YOU LATER!
WHERE IS SAHOKO-CHAN GOING? SHE HAS AN OVERNIGHT BAG WITH HER.
SHE'S GETTING HELP STUDYING FROM A GIRL IN HER CLASS WHO GETS REALLY GOOD GRADES.


SHACHOU*, MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T JUST TAKE HER WORD
WHAT?
WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL, I TRICKED MY PARENTS WITH THAT SORT OF LIE AND I'M GETTING THE FEELING SHE'S DOING THE SAME THING

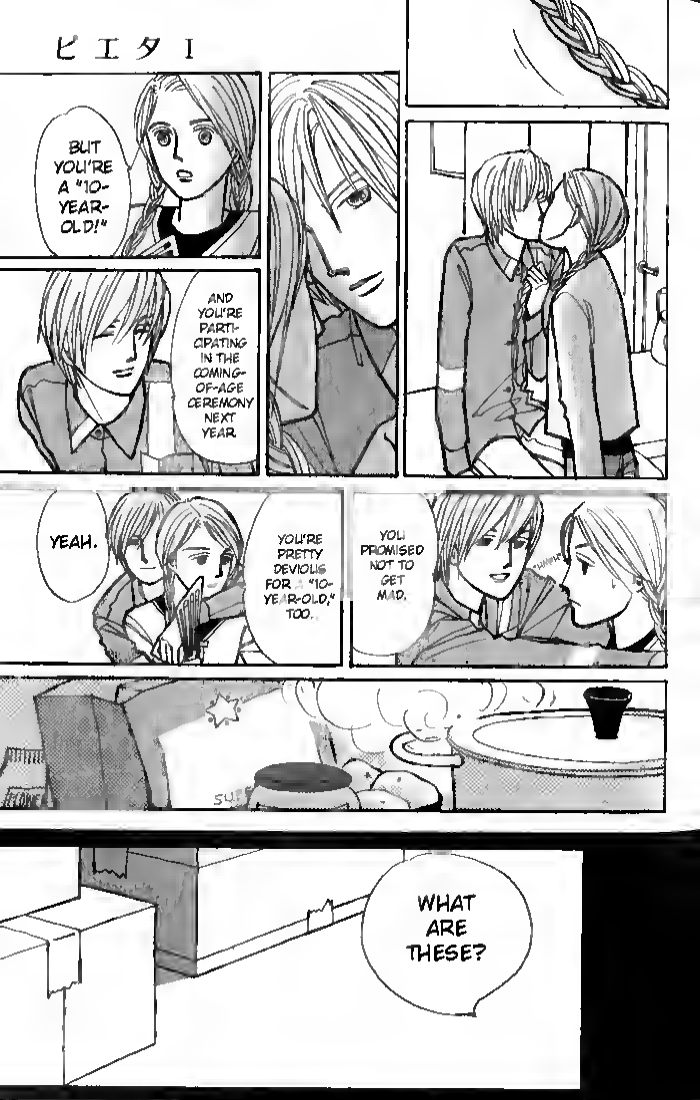
NOTE - SHACHOU MEANS HEAD OF A COMPANY

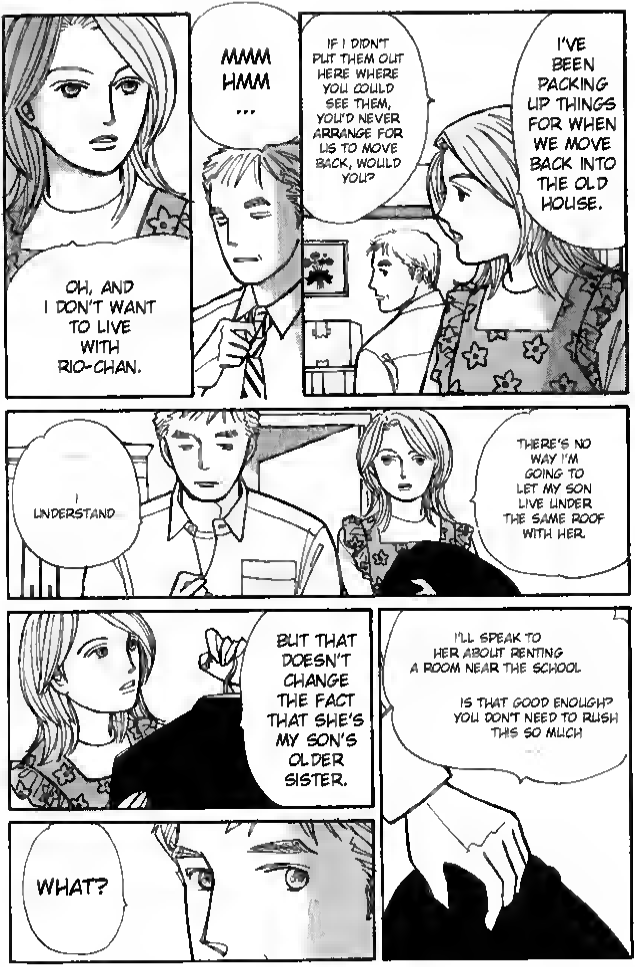


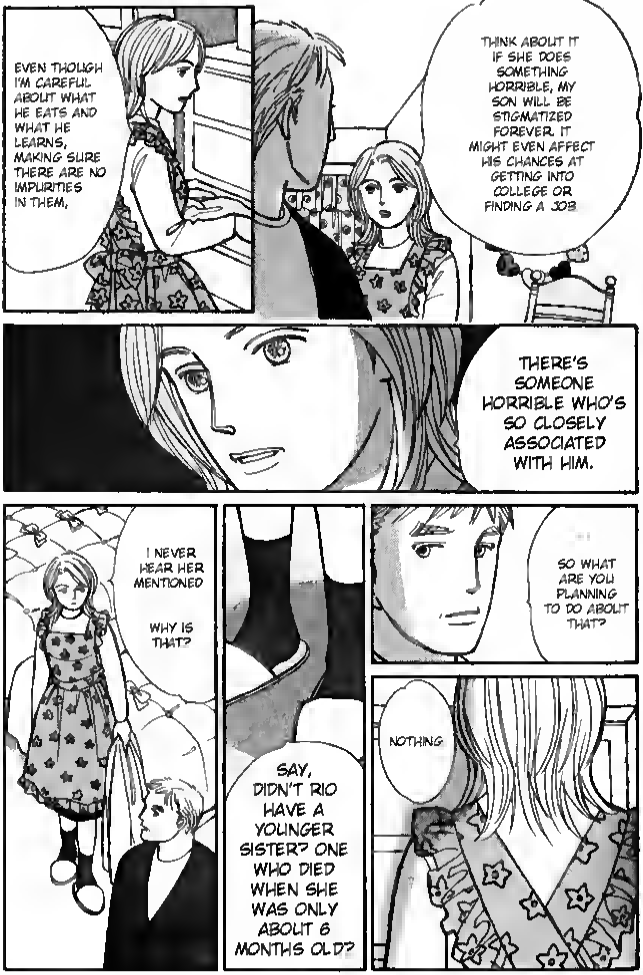

I DO A LITTLE, BUT NOT MUCH.
YOU DON'T COOK AT ALL DO YOU?
IT'S BECAUSE I DON'T LIKE KNIVES ...
HOW DID YOU MANAGE IN COOKING CLASS?
THE OTHER GIRLS IN MY GROUP DID ALL THE WORK.
I CAN JUST PICTURE IT—
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING BAD
OKAY
YOU DON'T LOOK RIGHT IN AN APRON
TAMPERING
BUT I DO KNOW HOW TO DO SOME STUFF ...
MHMM YOU'RE SORT OF IN THE WAY — WOULD YOU GO AND SIT OVER THERE?
WOULD YOU PEEL THE ONIONS?
OKAY ...
YOUR RICE COOKER IS DIFFERENT THAN MINE. IS THIS THE RIGHT SWITCH?

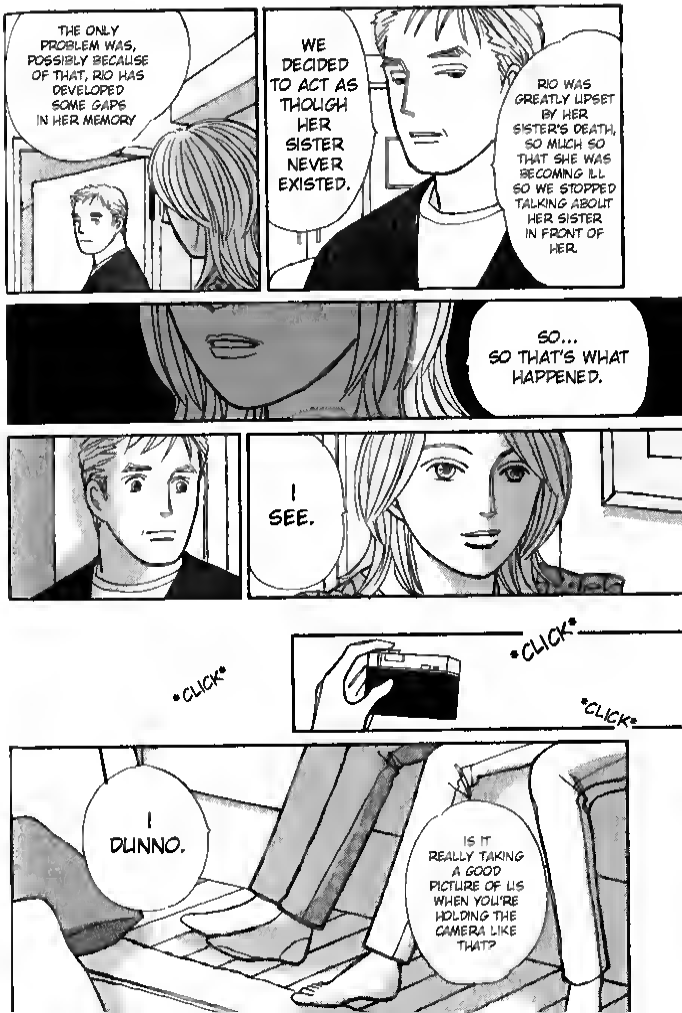
...
WE ONLY NEEDED ONE OR TWO. NOW IT'LL BE ONION CURRY!
YOU PEELED *ALL* OF THE ONIONS, RIO-CHAN?
COOKING IS FUN!
I'M NOT MAD
I WAS JUST POINTING OUT YOUR MISTAKE
YOU'RE MAD AT ME ...
YOU LOOK SAD.
HAHA
YEAH.
DO YOU HATE IT WHEN PEOPLE GET MAD AT YOU?
I'LL TRY NOT TO GET ANGRY AT YOU, THEN.

THERE ARE GAPS IN MY MEMORY
I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER MUCH FROM WHEN I WAS 10 YEARS OLD...
A 10-YEAR-OLD
A 10-YEAR-OLD?!
TOSSS
SOMETIMES YOU ACT LIKE A 10-YEAR-OLD CHILD, RIO-CHAN
WITHIN THREE BRAID-LENGTHS.
HOW CLOSE?
BESIDES, WE SHOULD STAY CLOSE TO EACH OTHER WHEN WE'RE TOGETHER LIKE THIS
D-ZO DOZO.
AT THIS TIME OF DAY IT HAS TO BE EITHER THE NEWSPAPER OR EVANGELISTS.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
SOMEONE'S
THERE ARE SOME THINGS WE CAN DO.
THEN WE CAN'T DO ANY-THING, CAN WE?


BUT YOU'RE A "10-YEAR-OLD!"
AND YOU'RE PARTICIPATING IN THE COMING-OF-AGE CEREMONY NEXT YEAR.
YEAH.
YOU'RE PRETTY DEVIOUS FOR A "10-YEAR-OLD," TOO.
YOU PROMISED NOT TO GET MAD.
WHAT ARE THESE?


I'VE BEEN PACKING UP THINGS FOR WHEN WE MOVE BACK INTO THE OLD HOUSE.
IF I DIDN'T PUT THEM OUT HERE WHERE YOU COULD SEE THEM, YOU'D NEVER ARRANGE FOR US TO MOVE BACK, WOULD YOU?
MMM HMM ...
OH, AND I DON'T WANT TO LIVE WITH RIO-CHAN.
THERE'S NO WAY I'M GOING TO LET MY SON LIVE UNDER THE SAME ROOF WITH HER.
I UNDERSTAND
BUT THAT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT SHE'S MY SON'S OLDER SISTER.
I'LL SPEAK TO HER ABOUT RENTING A ROOM NEAR THE SCHOOL
IS THAT GOOD ENOUGH? YOU DON'T NEED TO RUSH THIS SO MUCH
WHAT?


EVEN THOUGH I'M CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT HE EATS AND WHAT HE LEARNS, MAKING SURE THERE ARE NO IMPURITIES IN THEM,
THINK ABOUT IT IF SHE DOES SOMETHING HORRIBLE, MY SON WILL BE STIGMATIZED FOREVER. IT MIGHT EVEN AFFECT HIS CHANCES AT GETTING INTO COLLEGE OR FINDING A JOB.
THERE'S SOMEONE HORRIBLE WHO'S SO CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH HIM.
I NEVER HEAR HER MENTIONED
WHY IS THAT?
SAY, DIDN'T RIO HAVE A YOUNGER SISTER? ONE WHO DIED WHEN SHE WAS ONLY ABOUT 6 MONTHS OLD?
SO WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO ABOUT THAT?
NOTHING


THE ONLY PROBLEM WAS, POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF THAT, RIO HAS DEVELOPED SOME GAPS IN HER MEMORY
WE DECIDED TO ACT AS THOUGH HER SISTER NEVER EXISTED.
RIO WAS GREATLY UPSET BY HER SISTER'S DEATH, SO MUCH SO THAT SHE WAS BECOMING ILL SO WE STOPPED TALKING ABOUT HER SISTER IN FRONT OF HER.
SO... SO THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED.
I SEE.
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
I DUNNO.
IS IT REALLY TAKING A GOOD PICTURE OF US WHEN YOU'RE HOLDING THE CAMERA LIKE THAT?

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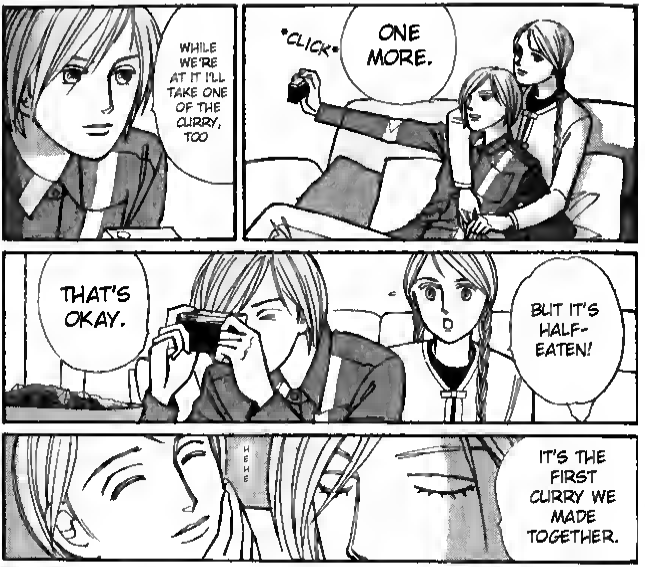

THAT WAVE MUST BE COMING HERE
FROM FARTHER AWAY THAN A MEMORY,

COMING HERE
TO IMMERSE US
IN THAT WATER.

PIETA #2 -END-